

Minutes of the BOARD MEETING

MENNONITE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA

22 January 2010
7:00-8:30 PM

Mennonite Heritage Village
Steinbach, MB

Present: Sam Steiner, President, Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario
Royden Loewen Vice-President, Chair of Mennonite Studies,
University of Winnipeg
Lucille Marr, Secretary, Société d'histoire mennonite du Québec
Richard Thiessen, Treasurer, Mennonite Historical Society of British
Columbia
Alf Redekopp, Mennonite Church Canada
Connie Braun, Mennonite Historical Society of British Columbia
Wesley Berg, Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta
Jake Buhler, Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan
Victor G. Wiebe, Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan
Bert Friesen, Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society
Conrad Stoesz, Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society
Robert Goertzen, Evangelical Mennonite Conference Archives
Abe Dueck, Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches
Barb Draper, Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario
Laureen Harder-Gissing, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada
Richard Lougheed, Société d'histoire mennonite du Québec

1. **Welcome** Roy Loewen and Bert Friesen welcomed board members to Manitoba for the society's 2010 annual meeting.
2. **Minutes:** Sam Steiner reviewed the minutes of the 22 January 2009 meeting
Motion that the minutes be accepted: M/S/C Lucille/Bert
3. **Business arising from the minutes**
 - a. ***Mennonites in Canada, gift to congregations update:***
630 copies of Volume 3 and 50 copies of Volume 2 were sent out to our congregations.
 - b. ***Mennonites in Canada, one-volume update:***
Sam updated the board on his conversation with Ted Regehr, noting that although Ted seems to be still open to the project, he has been prioritizing other projects and family concerns.
 - c. **MCC Canada history project:**
Roy reported on follow up with Esther Epp Tiessen. She is still interested in writing a fiftieth anniversary history of MCC Canada, but suggests that this may not be the best time to attempt to raise money for such a project.

4. **Agenda for Board and Annual Meeting:** approved

5. **President's report**

a. **Visioning Process:**

Sam suggested that it may be time to think about visioning for the future, reminding us that when the society started it was around one project – the three-volume Mennonite history; He reminded board members that GAMEO and Divergent Voices of Canadian Mennonites (DVCM) have been strong continuities of the society's initial vision to tell the story of Mennonites in Canada. With GAMEO moving towards becoming an international body and the time approaching to look at DVCM III, what is the society's vision for the future? Do we need the one-volume history? Or might we consider a different mode – perhaps an interactive website? Tomorrow's AGM will offer a chance to think about future directions.

6. **Mennonite Historical Society of Canada Award of Excellence Confirmation:**

The Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario nominated Lorraine Roth for the Award of Excellence. Sam read Ontario's detailed nomination letter outlining Lorraine's unusual and dedicated career as historian and genealogist.

M/S/C Barb Draper/Laureen Harder-Gissing

The board instructed the Ontario society to find a suitable context in which to present the award to Lorraine.

7. **MHSC Incorporation Update:**

a. **Bylaw Changes:**

The following changes have been made to the former document:

- brackets around Canada in MCC Canada have been removed
- SHMQ's name was revised from *La Société Mennonite historique du Québec* to *La Société mennonite d'histoire du Québec*
- "corporation" was changed to "society" throughout the document.
- the item referring to a corporate seal was removed.

The question remains: Does the society have bylaws or a constitution? Is there more thought required in editing the by-laws to become closer to being a constitution?

8. **Divergent Voices of Canadian Mennonites (DVCM)**

Roy reviewed the history of some years ago approaching Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) about taking a social history approach to address social and justice issues of interest to Canadian Mennonites. MCC has funded all of the DVCM conferences to date. This October is scheduled the seventh conference: Mennonites, Melancholy and Mental Health with a proposal deadline of February 1st. Roy encouraged board members to solicit potential researchers and presenters.

The topic of the 8th conference, which is scheduled for 2013, will be land, involving questions of justice including environmental history.

At some point we need to think creatively about whether we want to do DVCM III. What kinds of topic would we include? What would interest MCC Canada?

9. MHSC Website Task Force Report

The new committee being proposed would oversee the MHSC web site component on genealogy (mennonitegenealogy.com). Bert suggested that a national coordinator for the genealogy project is needed.

10. Finance Report

a. Summary of Financial Statement

Treasurer Richard Thiessen reported that the society is not expecting much change in its income. Costs should be less this year because we are not sending out copies of *Mennonites in Canada*. Although the major cost is DVCM, it is actually funded by MCC Canada. Thus the major expenses relate to the GAMEO project. An additional one-time expense will be support for the Siberia conference. All this to say that the society will end up in good financial shape with \$37,000 in its bank account.

b. Discussion on society/institutional membership fees

Richard Thiessen raised the question of why society fees are different. Discussion brought out the following reasons. Early in the history of the society, all the provincial societies paid \$500. To increase the budget, some of the stronger societies were asked to increase and some did. Meanwhile, newer, smaller societies were given a break. As far as conferences go, they gave what they wanted to. Mennonite Church Eastern Canada is the only regional conference that donates. MCC contributes through DVCM and Mennonite Church Canada donates to GAMEO, thus neither gives directly to the society's budget.

A brief discussion resulted in the decision to continue status quo. Sam suggested, though, that this raises the question of expanding the perspective around the table. A representative from the Brethren in Christ will be here tomorrow; other potential members might be Alberta's North West Conference, the Maritime provinces, Newfoundland. Are there institutions or local history societies that might want to join, for instance, the Institute of Anabaptist Mennonite Studies at Conrad Grebel University College? The new Chair of Mennonite Studies in Abbotsford? Hutterites? Plett Foundation?

Finally, it was noted that although the society seems to have been taken over by some of the larger denominations, a larger board could become unwieldy; after all, we're here to get things done.

11. Budget 2009/2010

To be presented to the AGM.

12. Nominations Committee report

Last year the board appointed Maurice Martin and Laureen Harder-Gissing to the nominations committee. They contacted all the current executive members and asked them to continue and all agreed.

13. Other items to be brought before the board?

Bert asked whether the society might consider an investment policy.

14. Adjourned